Protection of Indian tourism industry

*208.SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government is taking to protect the Indian tourism industry from the global meltdown; and

(b) what is the expected increase/decrease of tourist arrivals in the current year, given the present economic scenario?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Ministry of Tourism is taking the following steps to protect the Indian tourism industry from the global meltdown:

(i) Providing enhanced financial support under the Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme to approved Indian travel agents, tour operators, hoteliers for sale-cum-study tours, participation in trade fairs and production of publicity material.

(ii) Providing financial support to approved Indian travel agents, tour operators and hoteliers for projecting India as an attractive tourist destination for domestic tourists.

(iii) Providing financial assistance to representatives of approved hospitals for promotion of Medical Tourism in overseas markets.

(b) The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during January November, 2008 is estimated at 4.84 million, which is higher than FTAs of 4.48 million during January - November, 2007. However, the growth rate in FTAs during January-November, 2008 over the corresponding period of 2007 is only 8% as compared to growth rate of 14.8% during January-November, 2007 over the corresponding period of 2006.

Jobs for disabled persons in the private sector

*209.SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI R.C. SINGH:
Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a plan was announced during the last Budget Speech to employ one lakh disabled persons in private sector in the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details of the plan;

(c) whether it is a fact that not a single appointment has been made so far under this scheme; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and what corrective measures are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, in the budget speech of 2007-08, Government committed support for